

1-1-2003

## Transferable Living Unit: Prototype Housing for the Transient

Jay Siebenmorgen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://newprairiepress.org/oz>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0 License](#).

---

### Recommended Citation

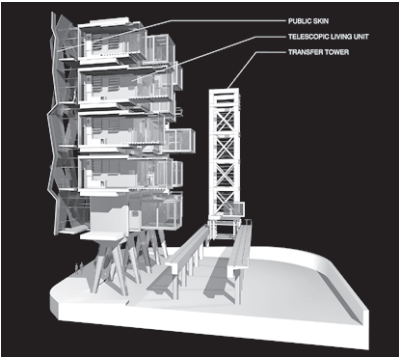
Siebenmorgen, Jay (2003) "Transferable Living Unit: Prototype Housing for the Transient," *Oz*: Vol. 25. <https://doi.org/10.4148/2378-5853.1396>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by New Prairie Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Oz* by an authorized administrator of New Prairie Press. For more information, please contact [cads@k-state.edu](mailto:cads@k-state.edu).

# Transferable Living Unit

## Prototype Housing for the Transient

Jay Siebenmorgen



### Life Is Movement

In future societies, what will it mean to dwell? Globalization is changing the way we engage the world. We are in a culture that is increasingly fixated on speed, efficiency, and the accessibilities of information exchange. In the modern world, efficiency is

the trademark operative of our lives. It has the power to define our social value. From macro to micro scales we have become consumed with living in movement, fostering an aberrant society that negotiates between virtual and actual existence—a transient society of information dwellers. It is a culture in which permanence is not only undesirable, but futile.

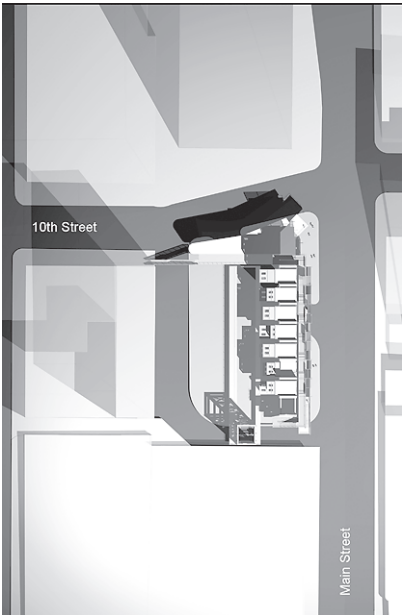
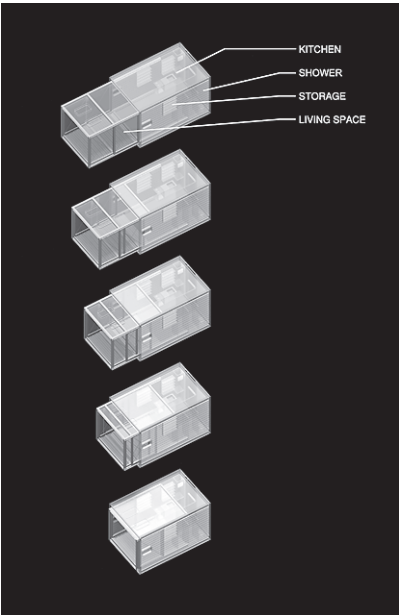
To keep pace with global developments, corporations are maintaining a working class built on the ephemeral values of the nomad. Willingly, individuals chose this lifestyle. Their careers take them from city to city, living in the perpetual state of a brief stay or sojourn that may vary from six months to three years at a time. Does this imply that one

continually sacrifices their identity with each shift of location? We must rethink the architectural potential of program to their lives.

The Transferable Living Unit (TLU) has been designed as a hybrid, living architecture, created to maximize inner working relationships within the system of globalization. The transient can now purchase a living module that disregards the conventions of permanence for options of mobility. TLU superstructures will be sited in every major city throughout the world, seeking to reclaim voids in the urban context.

The first prototype structure has been designed for a site in down-

town Kansas City, Missouri. At the intersection of Tenth and Main Streets a bus terminal exists within a vacated site, previously occupied by office buildings from the nineteenth century. Although it is an effective location for this node of public transportation, the bus terminal is a detractor of urban density. TLU superstructures seek to capitalize on such relationships. On Main Street, the superstructure reinserts an urban facade, placing commercial/retail spaces at the street level while maintaining the dynamic function of the bus terminal. The site's central function of mobility sets the stage for a dialogue between the flows of public movement and the ephemeral architecture of the nomad.



The TLU module is designed for current shipping industries. A telescopic framework is incorporated to maximize square footage possibilities. It is a user controlled system allowing a shift in space from 300 to 600 square feet, offering flexibility in comfort and privacy desires, while minimizing shipping costs. New material technologies are integrated that include high strength-to-weight-ratio plastics for the utilitarian programs, and glazing systems that allow the user to shift opacities from translucent to transparent.

As a Transferable Living Unit arrives on site, it is placed into the Transfer Tower where it is lifted and “plugged in” to the desired area of vacancy in the

superstructure matrix. Mechanical and electrical conduits are connected, enacting a fully operational living unit.

Occupancy becomes self-evident within the superstructure matrix. The Main Street facade has been designed as a public skin maintaining a corollary relationship to each living unit. Each panel interconnects to the adjacent TLU with hydraulic expansion rods. As the inhabitants telescope their unit in accordance to dwelling needs, it is reflected in the shifting movement of the public skin. An ephemeral architectural experience is now injected into the urban context, reflecting on the notion that life is movement.

